R 24/6/989

Lake Red Rock

US Army Corps
of Engineers
Rock Island District

0103.2:

Lake Red Rock

For Camping, Fishing, or Lake Level Information call: 800-362-2001

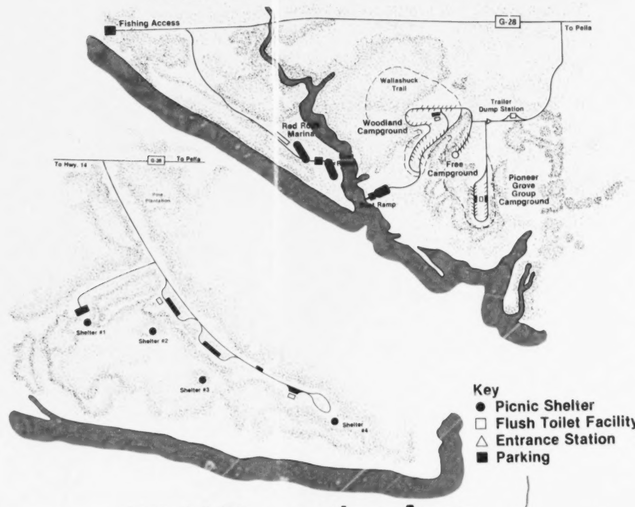
For Additional Information:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Park Manager
Lake Red Rock, R.R. 3, Box 149A, Knoxville, IA 50138
Tel. #(515) 828-7522

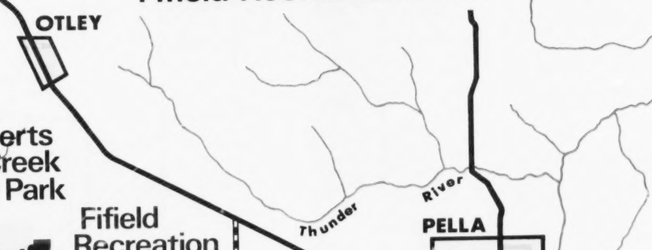
U.S. Army Engineer District, Rock Island
Clock Tower Building
Rock Island, Illinois 61201

- Corps of Engineers Recreation Areas
- Other Corps of Engineers Managed Lands
- Wildlife Management Area - Iowa Department Of Natural Resources
- Elk Rock State Park Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Roberts Creek Park Marion County Conservation Board
- Shallow Water Boating Not Recommended
- Primary Travel Routes
- Secondary Travel Routes

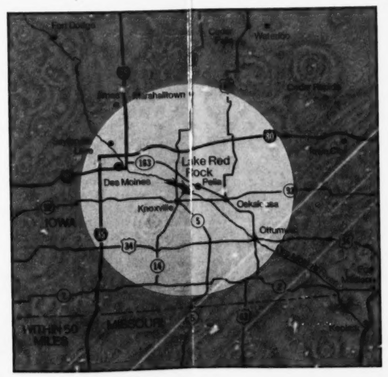
Wallashuck Recreation Area



Fifield Recreation Area



Whitebreast Recreation Area



	CORPS OF ENGINEERS RECREATION AREAS	OTHER PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS	ROBERTS CREEK	ELK ROCK (NORTH)	ELK ROCK (SOUTH)	COMMERCIAL CONCESSIONS	RED ROCK MARINA	NORTH SHORE BOATS
LAUNCHING RAMP	●	●	●				●	
CAMPING	●							
EQUESTRIAN CAMPING	●							
GROUP CAMPING (by reservation)	●							
PICNIC AREA	●	●	●					
PICNIC SHELTER	●							
RESTROOMS	●						●	
SHOWERS	●							
ELECTRICAL HOOKUPS	●							
DUMPING STATIONS	●							
TRAIL	●							
EQUESTRIAN TRAIL	●							
SWIMMING	●							
BOATING SUPPLIES	●						●	●

* U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1989 - 644-666

History

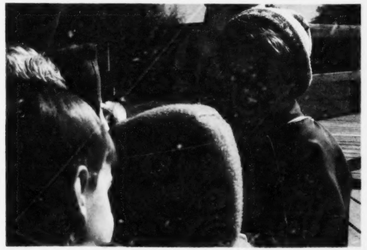
In 1842, a treaty was signed with the Sac and Fox Indians that gave the white settlers the right to settle those lands "lying east of a north-south line running through the red rocks on the Des Moines River." This line to distinguish the United States from Indian Territory crossed the Des Moines River a short distance upstream of the soon-to-be built village of Red Rock.

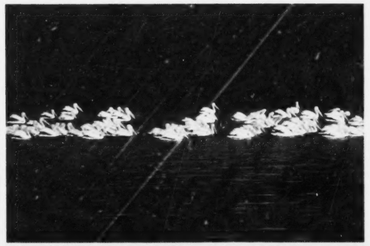
On May 1, 1843, the very first day the new territory was open for settlement, John Bedell built a light pole cabin along the Des Moines River near the red rock cliffs. Several other settlers followed and in 1845, Mr. Bedell surveyed ten acres into town lots. The new town, one of the first in the county, was named Red Rock.

In 1847 and 1848, many additions were made to the population of the village, and several frame and respectable log houses were built, giving it a thriving appearance. Indeed, the prospect seemed favorable for ultimate expansion into the proportions of a city. Some effort was made to get the county seat located there. It is ironic that this effort was defeated by the results of the same natural force that would lead to the town's final demise some 120 years later. In 1851, a sweeping flood deluged the town and sent the town residents scurrying to safety on the nearby bluffs.

The town and the people recovered remarkably well from the flood, but there was damage wrought by this flood that was irreparable to the village of Red Rock. Its reputation as a safe and, therefore, suitable place of business had been swept away with the flood.

Regardless of its problems with flooding, Red Rock retained a special place in the history of Marion County. From the first to last, Red Rock possessed a notoriety not enjoyed by any other village in the county. Situated on a much frequented Indian trail, and at the border of the





United States territory, it early became a place of resort for the Indians and settlers for the purpose of trading and obtaining whiskey at the trading houses. It also became the frequent meeting place for the rougher portion of the settlers, and others whose character classed them with adventurers and desperadoes; and as a natural result of such fusion of spirits, inspired more or less by the ardent, fights were of frequent occurrence. It is a fact worthy to note that Red Rock, though a comparatively small place, was the scene of no less than ten murders by 1877.

Red Rock retained much of its character and notoriety until the 1960's when Lake Red Rock was completed.

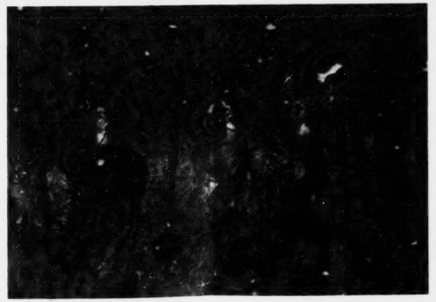
Wildlife

If you enjoy birdwatching, wildlife photography, hunting, or just plain watching wildlife, Lake Red Rock is the place to go. Two hundred and seventy-seven different species of birds and 35 species of mammals have been seen at the lake. Deer, squirrel, cottontail rabbits, pheasants, bobwhite quail and bluebirds are common and often seen by campers and picnickers. The more patient and dedicated wildlife observers are sometimes rewarded by the sight of an American bald eagle, double-crested cormorant, river otter, or other rare or endangered species.

Despite its endangered status, the bald eagle is a fairly common sight below the dam during the winter. It perches in the large cottonwood crowns and feeds in the open waters below the dam after most lakes and streams ice up. The old iron bridge below the dam is a popular eagle observation area.

Naming The Lake

The naming of Lake Red Rock followed a long standing Corps of Engineers' tradition of naming the lake after a local town. The town of Red Rock, named after the red sandstone bluffs nearby, was located just upstream of where the Highway 14 Mile Long Bridge now crosses Lake Red Rock. Red Rock was a town of considerable notoriety and a worthy namesake for the lake that was built nearly 130 years after the first log cabin at Red Rock.



Archaeology

The Central Des Moines River Valley, including the Red Rock area, has a very interesting background of Indian occupation. Several investigations of archaeological sites in and around Red Rock have revealed the prehistoric sequence of events in the Des Moines River Valley.

About 5,500 years ago an Archaic Indian culture known as the Keg Creek Complex developed in Iowa and artifacts from this culture have been found in the Red Rock area. Several thousand years later a rather intensive occupation of Woodland Indians occurred.

Woodland Indians are distinguished from their ancestors by their development of pottery, a transition to permanent villages, and the shift from the simplest horticulture to a well developed gardening complex. Later (600 to 1000 years ago) the area was occupied by people from the Oneota Culture. The Oneota people were both hunters and farmers and are thought to be the forerunners of the Ioway Indians.

During the historic times, the Sac and Fox Indians lived and traveled throughout the Red Rock area.

Artifacts found at the archaeological sites used by the early dwellers included arrow points, stone axes, pottery, animal bones, lanceolite knives, hide scrapers, and sandstone abraders.

The Sac and Fox Indians were a peaceful people that lived in harmony with the white settlers in the area. Chief Keokuk, chief of the Sac-Fox nation, as well as other Indian leaders such as subchief Kish-ke-kosh, visited, traded, and dined with various settlers at and near the village of Red Rock in the early 1840's.

The present name for Whitebreast Creek and Campground comes from an English interpretation of the name (Waupa-cauki) given to the creek by the Indians. Tradition has it that an Indian killed a black bear on the creek that had a patch of white fur on its breast. The Indians named the creek Whitebreast in honor of their quarry. Later a village chief, named Whitebreast, carried on the name until the white settlers came and adopted the name for the creek and their early settlement near the mouth of the creek.

Recreation

Each year over one million people visit Lake Red Rock to take advantage of its many and varied recreational opportunities.

Fishing, boating, and water skiing are all available on the lake's 7,000 acres. Boat ramps provide easy access to various parts of the lake.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manages eight recreational areas, including four major campgrounds with over 400 Class A campsites. Campfire programs are held each Friday and Saturday nights at the North Overlook and Howell Station Campgrounds. The programs feature natural resource and safety topics to entertain all ages of visitors.

The Marion County Conservation Board operates the Roberts Creek Lake Park which features a beautiful lake, camping, and a beach.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources maintains several fine picnic areas, a campground and an additional 25,000 acres of wildlife management area.

Nearby attractions include the historical Dutch community of Pella with its annual Tulip Time in May and Knoxville with its Saturday night sprint car races.

Each year the Red Rock Lake Association sponsors Family Days over the Labor Day weekend. The event features numerous activities for all members of the family including: banjo, fiddling and harmonica contests, turtle races, cross country races, hot air balloon ascensions, and much more. All events are free.

Lake Red Rock

Many years of effort and nearly 88 million dollars were devoted to developing Lake Red Rock.

Located in the lush green, rolling farmland of south central Iowa, Lake Red Rock provides valuable assets to many facets of the population.

Floods along the Des Moines River in 1851, 1858, and 1962 caused extensive property damage and personal suffering. On June 1, 1947, one of the most disastrous floods in the history of Iowa caused more than $30 million damage and inundated large sections of Ottumwa.

Following the tremendous floods of 1947, Congress appropriated funds for investigation of the proper site to build a dam in the Red Rock area. Responsibility for the planning, design and supervision of the construction of the dam was given to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District. Planning was interrupted by the Korean Conflict but resumed in 1956. Construction began in 1960 and culminated in March 1969. Once completed, the project began to pay dividends immediately as heavy snow melted and rains filled the new lake within four days. More rain and potential flooding forced the pool level to 40 feet over the planned normal level by August 1st. An estimated $6 million dollars in damage was prevented by the new project during its first 135 days. Since then there is no doubt that the Red Rock Dam project has contributed to the controlling of flood waters on the Des Moines River, as well as downstream on the Mississippi. From March 1969 to June 1987, it has prevented over $96 million in damages. The majority of these damages were prevented in July 1969, April 1973, and June 1984.

With the history of devastating floods fresh in their minds, the designers of Lake Red Rock were concerned mainly with flood protection. However, it was wisely decided that maintenance of a minimum low flow of 300 cubic feet per second in dry seasons was also an urgent need since the river, downstream of the dam, is a daily source of water for human consumption. To satisfy this need and the recreational demands of the area, a permanent pool of 7,000 acres is maintained.

Another important project purpose is the management and enhancement of fish and wildlife resources. A large portion of the 47,610 acres of project lands are open to public hunting and fishing. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has, under a long term lease, 25,572 acres of prime river bottomlands that they are managing as a wildlife management area.

Red Rock Facts

LOCATION
- Stream ..... Des Moines River
- Miles above mouth 142.9
- Watershed above dam, square miles ... 12,323

DAM
- Earth Sections:
  - Total length, feet 5,676
  - Maximum height, feet 110
  - Width at base, feet 658
- Spillway section:
  - Type .... Controlled with Tainter crest gates
  - Number of crest gates 5
  - Size of crest gates, feet 41x45
- Outlet Works:
  - Type ..... Concrete conduits
  - Conduits, number 14
  - Conduits, size, feet 5x9

LAKE
- Length in miles:
  - Flood control pool 33.5
  - Normal pool 8.0
- Water surface elevation (feet above sea level):
  - Flood control pool 780
  - Normal pool 728
- Area in acres:
  - Flood control pool 65,500
  - Normal pool 7,000

Lake and outflow records (as of June 1987)

	Level	Date
Maximum pool (feet above sea level)	779.62	6/26/84
Minimum pool (feet above sea level)	719.68	2/18/77
Maximum outflow (cubic feet per second)	40,000	6/19/84